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TAGS: [PREL](#) [EAID](#) [UN](#)

SUBJECT: PEACEBUILDING COMMISSION:

REF: USUN

Classified By: U.S. REPRESENTATIVE TO THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL,
AMBASSADOR RICHARD T. MILLER, REASONS: 1.5(b)(d)

11. (U) This is an action cable. Guidance requested in para below.

SUMMARY

12. (C) The 31 members of the newly-formed UN Peacebuilding Commission (PBC)(reftel), agreed informally on June 16 that Angola will serve as the first Chair of the PBC, paving the way for the formal inaugural meeting of the PBC to go forward on June 23. Burundi and Sierra Leone are the countries most likely to be the first focus of the PBC's agenda, once a formal request is received from the Security Council. El Salvador and Norway should be endorsed early next week as Vice Chairs. All decisions of the PBC will be taken by consensus of the members; discussion of whether the international financial institutions are defined as "members" for this purpose is still under discussion. End Summary.

CHAIRMANSHIP

13. (C) Throughout discussions in early June, the seven

African members of the PBC asserted that the first Chair should be from Africa, due to the preponderance of post-conflict situations in that region. Egypt lobbied heavily to be selected, winning the endorsement of the Africa Group. In the face of stiff opposition from several members, including the U.S., Egypt withdrew and the Africa Group subsequently put forward the Permanent Representative of Angola, Ambassador Ismael Gaspar Martins, who was endorsed by acclamation as chairman of the PBC.

COUNTRY-SPECIFIC FORMAT

¶4. (SBU) The main work of the PBC will be done in its country-specific formats. The PBC Organizational Committee will choose two or three countries to focus on first. Burundi and Sierra Leone have both written to the GA President asking to be placed on the PBC agenda. As both these countries are currently on the Security Council's agenda, the SC must formally ask the PBC to take up these countries. We expect the SC President to get the concurrence of the SC members in the coming week for that request. East Timor, Haiti and Liberia have been mentioned informally as possibilities for the PBC's agenda in future.

FUNCTIONING OF THE PBC

¶5. (C) The creation of the PBC affords an opportunity to improve upon the UN's usual working methods. We are working with other like-minded countries to ensure that the body will be innovative and flexible in its rules and procedures. The

bulk of the PBC's work will take place in the country-specific formats, not in the organizational committee. USUN believes the PBC will function best if it provides a venue for experts from the field -- such as Ministers from the target country; UN resident coordinators or Special Representatives of the Secretary General (SRSGs); ambassadors, DCMs or aid mission Directors of donor countries to the target country; field representatives or desk officers from the World Bank and other IFIs, etc. -- to meet and exchange information and views on the best ways forward. This would prevent the tendency of some NY-based missions to view everything through the prism of north-south divides and is more likely to lead to well-informed recommendations from the PBC that donors can support.

¶6. (SBU) The rules of procedure are still under discussion, with the aim of agreeing on at least minimal Provisional Rules before June 23. Major points to be discussed include how often the PBC will meet; whether meetings will be open or closed; how the agenda of the PBC will be set; how long the chair will serve; what the chair's functions will be; the role of IFIs, NGOs and other non-State actors; and the nature of the PBC's advice, recommendations and reports. USDel will work to keep the rules as light and flexible as possible, with the option of adjusting to circumstances as they unfold.

VICE-CHAIRS

¶7. (C) The ambassadors of El Salvador and Norway has put themselves forward as the two Vice Chairs. No delegations voiced opposition to these candidates, although the Africans asked for more time to consider the question before formally agreeing, on procedural grounds. We expect the vice-chairs will be asked each to chair a country-specific formats. If more countries are added to the PBC agenda in future, the option is open to choose more vice-chairs, presumably from Asia or Eastern Europe (the two regional groups not represented in the PBC's bureau).

NEXT MEETING

¶8. (SBU) The next informal consultation among PBC members will take place on Tuesday, June 20 to decide on the Vice Chairs, and possibly on the two countries for country-specific focus.

GUIDANCE REQUESTED

19. (SBU) Mission would appreciate Department's views on Burundi and Sierra Leone as the first two countries to be on the PBC agenda.

BOLTON